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MASSACHUSETTS

MASSACHUSETTS
AN OLD AND PROSPEROUS DEMOCRACY AND A SAFE SOCIAL ORDER · AN ADDRESS

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NOTE

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS Prince Henry of Prussia visited Boston on March 6th, 1902. At the dinner given by the City in his honor to a company of representative men, Charles W. Eliot LL. D., President of Harvard University, made the following address in answer to the toast "Massachusetts."

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YOUR Royal Highness: The nation's guests—Boston's this evening—have just had some momentary glimpses of the extemporized American cities, of the prairies and the Alleghanies, of some great rivers and lakes, and of prodigious Niagara, & so they have perhaps some vision of the large scale of our country, although they have run over not more than one-thirtieth of its area; but now they have come to little Massachusetts, lying on the extreme eastern seacoast—

by comparison a minute Commonwealth, with a rough climate and a poor soil.

It has no good scenery to exhibit, no stately castles, churches, or palaces come down through centuries, such as Europe offers, and for at least two generations it has been quite unable to compete with the fertile fields of the West in producing its own food supplies. What has Massachusetts to show them, or any intelligent European visitors? Only the fruitage —social, industrial and governmental—of the oldest & most prosperous democracy in the world.

For two hundred and eighty years

this little Commonwealth has been developing in freedom, with no class legislation, feudal system, dominant Church, or standing army to hinder or restrain it. The period of development has been long enough to show what the issues of democracy are likely to be; and it must be interesting for cultivated men brought up under another regime to observe that human nature turns out to be much the same thing under a democratic form of Government as under the earlier forms, and that the fundamental motives and objects of mankind remain almost unchanged amid external conditions somewhat novel.

Democracy has not discovered or created a new human nature; it has only modified a little the familiar article. The domestic affections, and loyalty to tribe, clan, race or nation still rule mankind. The family motive remains supreme.

It is an accepted fact that the character of each civilized nationality is well exhibited in its universities. Now Harvard University has been largely governed for two hundred and fifty years by a body of seven men called the Corporation. Every member of that Corporation which received Your Royal Highness this afternoon at Cambridge is descended

from a family stock which has been serviceable in Massachusetts for at least seven generations.

More than one hundred years ago Washington was asked to describe all the high officers in the American army of that day who might be thought of for the chief command. He gave his highest praise to Major General Lincoln of Massachusetts, saying of him that he was "sensible, brave and honest." There are Massachusetts Lincolns today to whom these words exactly apply.

The democracy preserves & uses sound old families; it also utilizes strong blood from foreign sources.

Thus, in the second governing board of Harvard University—the Overseers—a French Bonaparte, a member of the Roman Catholic Church, sits beside a Scotch farmer's son, Presbyterian by birth and education, now become the leader in every sense of the most famous Puritan Church in Boston. The democracy also promotes human beings of remarkable natural gifts who appear as sudden outbursts of personal power, without prediction or announcement through family merit. It is the social mobility of a democracy which enables it to give immediate place to personal merit, whether inherited or

not, and also silently to drop unserviceable descendants of earlier meritorious generations.

Democracy, then, is only a further unfolding of the multitudinous human nature, which is essentially stable. It does not mean the abolition of leadership or an averaged population, or a dead-level of society. Like monarchical and aristocratic forms of government, it means a potent influence for those who prove capable of exerting it, and a highly diversified society on many shifting levels, determined in liberty and perpetually exchanging members up and down. It means sensuous luxury for those

who want it and can afford to pay for it; & for the wise rich it provides the fine luxury of promoting public objects by well-considered giving.

Since all the world seems tending toward this somewhat formidable democracy, it is encouraging to see what the result of two hundred and eighty years of democratic experience has been in this peaceful and prosperous Massachusetts. Democracy has proved here to be a safe social order—safe for the property of individuals, safe for the finer arts of living, safe for diffused public happiness and well-being.

We remember gratefully in this

presence that a strong root of Massachusetts liberty and prosperity was the German Protestantism of four centuries ago, and that another and fresher root of well-being for every manufacturing people, like the people of Massachusetts, has been German applied science during the past fifty years. We hope as Your Royal Highness goes homeward bound across the restless Atlantic—type of the rough 'sea of storm-engendering liberty'—you may cherish a cheerful remembrance of barren but rich, strenuous but peaceful, free but self-controlled MASSACHUSETTS.

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